

Bridges Library System Staff Reports

January 2025

Karol Kennedy – Library System Director

Library Legislative Day (LLD) 2025: Time is running out! Registration for LLD closes on Friday, January 10th. Please consider if you or someone from your library or community can join us to tell your library success stories. State library aid in the biennial state budget benefits all Wisconsin libraries. This is a budget producing year! Strong attendance on February 11th by staff—and trustees—at both the system and member library level is extremely important.

We are excited to be partnering with Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) again this year to offer transportation to the event. The bus will pick up at Milwaukee Public Library and the Goerkes Corners and the Johnson Creek Park & Ride locations. Bridges and MCFLS will be sharing the cost of this service. There is no additional cost for LLD attendees.

Annual Reports: We are in the process of gathering the statistics and information to pre-populate all the data we can for member libraries' annual reports. This information is due to the state by January 17th. DPI plans to open the annual report portal to libraries on or about January 22nd. State statutes require libraries to file their annual reports by March 1, 2025. Library System reports are due March 31st. Thank you to Mellanie who does so much to ensure these numbers are accurate and ready to go by the deadline!

Annual Evaluations: I completed performance evaluations for staff and submitted documentation for any merit increases with Waukesha County. I met with each staff member to review the past year and talk about their goals for the year ahead. Rounding sessions will be scheduled throughout the year to check in on these goals, review other accomplishments, and discuss any other performance topics.

Retirements: Laurie Freund, Coordinator of Library Development, announced her retirement effective April 4, 2025. I am working with Waukesha County Human Resources to post this position within the next week.

I also announced my plans to retire in June of this year. I want to thank all who reached out to me with kind words about this announcement. It means so much to me. This was a difficult decision. I love the work we do and the opportunity to serve and support libraries and the communities they serve. I know I will miss the wonderful people I get to work with most of all.

The Bridges Personnel Committee met January 6th to discuss the process for hiring a new library system director. More information will be provided in the weeks ahead. I will do everything I can to ensure a smooth transition.

Laurie Freund – Coordinator of Library Development

[Wild WI Winter Web Conference \(Jan 22nd-23rd\)](#): You can still register and attend sessions for this annual online conference. There are four tracks this year: management, reference and readers advisory, internal communications, and small libraries. All sessions will be recorded and made available after the conference.

My Retirement: Last month I announced that I will be retiring this spring. My last day will be Friday, April 4th, marking the end of over 36 incredible years at Bridges Library System and roughly 40 years as a librarian. Over the next few months, I will continue to work on adult services, professional development, and delivery aspects and concerns that will help support our member libraries as well as the SEWI Libraries region. Please continue to feel free to contact me during this time.

Angela Meyers – Coordinator of Youth and Inclusive Services

Inclusive Services

Library Memory Project: After extensive planning, the Library Memory Project held its second Symposium on December 10th at Aurora Summit in Draper Hall. Nineteen of the 21 participating libraries attended. The event featured guest presentations and workshops from the Aging and Disability Resource Centers of Jefferson and Waukesha counties, Infinite OT, Bridges' Emily Heller on Marketing, and member libraries Delafield and Fort Atkinson. Attendees



Library Memory Project Symposium Attendees



Angela with book donations for the Jefferson County Jail

provided positive feedback on the event.

Hearing Loops: I conducted training for department heads at the Dwight Foster Public Library (Fort Atkinson) on using and promoting their new service desk hearing loops, sponsored by Bridges Library System.

Jail Outreach: Bridges Library System supplied educational materials to the Jefferson County Library Council for use in classroom settings with incarcerated individuals at Jefferson County Jail. Additionally, we coordinated a used book drive, collecting 457 books from member libraries for leisure reading at the jail.

Youth Services

I am coordinating performers and workshops for member libraries' summer programming. New this year, Bridges is sponsoring three family-friendly programs and one teen/tween workshop for each library, totaling 96 bookings.

Upcoming meetings include:

Teen Think Tank Thurs., Jan. 16th 1:00pm (virtual)

Youth Services Meet Up Tues., Feb. 25th 1:00pm Oconomowoc Public Library

Kids' Choice Nominations Meeting Thurs., Mar. 6th Time TBD Delafield Public Library

Teen Think Tank Tues., Mar. 18th 1:30pm L.D. Fargo Public Library (Lake Mills)

Beth Bechtel – Database Management Librarian

Cataloger Meetings

The last 2024 virtual CAFÉ cataloger meetup included discussion of special edition books with stenciled edges, renaming the catalog's "bindery" status to be used for other purposes, and the possibility of individual catalog records for Tonie figurines so patrons can access them by subject.

I met in person with staff at Town Hall Library (North Lake) and Big Bend libraries for cataloging consultations, and virtually with the cataloger in Fort Atkinson.

Catalog Maintenance

In late December, I reviewed item codes to look for outliers needing editing before annual report collection statistics were compiled in January. In some cases, I contacted catalogers at individual libraries so they could determine whether their codes needed to be changed. There were only small problems caused by clicking on an adjacent code in a dropdown menu during cataloging.

Cataloging staff in our member libraries use templates to create brief bibliographic records when full information about the book or other library item is not available elsewhere. In 2024, I reviewed and/or enhanced 1,633 of these temporary bib records. This number is up more than 45% from 2023, thanks to the OCLC Searching Service software tool I started using mid-year.

Emily Heller – Public Communications Coordinator

That's a Wrap!

Bridges Library System's featured a 2024 Wrapped List on social media of the top 5 items in various category. The "Wrapped" trend, popularized by Spotify, gained great attention on social media because it combines our community achievements in shareable content. It also reinforces the value of our libraries! [Check it out on Facebook](#) and see the statistics below.

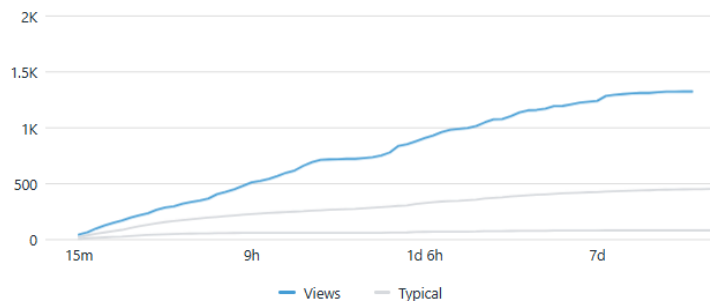
Overview

Views 1,324 Reach 607 Interactions 39 Link clicks --

^ This post received more views compared to your recent Facebook posts.

Views

1,324



^ This post received more interactions compared to your recent Facebook posts.

Interactions

39

Reactions 28 Comments 6 Shares 3 Saves 2

Feed preview

The image shows a Facebook post from the Bridges Library System, published by Emily Heller on December 20, 2024, at 10:00 AM. The post text asks if the user has ever wondered what the most popular checkouts were for the whole library system and announces the '2024 Wrapped!' with book covers. The post features three 'BRIDGES WRAPPED 2024' graphics: 'Adult Fiction Books', 'Adult Nonfiction Books', and 'Adult eBooks'. Below the graphics are interaction buttons for 'Boost', 'Like', 'Comment', and 'Share'. The post has 28 reactions, 6 comments, and 3 shares. A comment from Jenny Mickle is visible, stating 'The year of the pigeon 🐦 LOVED the'. There is also a '+4' icon indicating more comments.

Destination Library Direct Mail Postcard Campaign Results

Bridges member libraries had 279 postcards returned in-person between November 26th – December 21st to be submitted into the Amazon Gift Card drawing. This was a 1.7% return rate for the campaign. According to Invesp Consulting in Chicago, the average conversion rate for direct mail marketing campaigns typically ranges between 0.5% - 2%. I was hoping for a higher return, but I am happy that we fell within the typical range. The unique website landing page had 42 visits in a month.

The gift card winners will be announced the week of Jan. 13th.

Frost & Found: Virtual Library System Trivia begins Monday, January 13th!

We'll kick-off the fun, online trivia quiz event to invite people to learn about Bridges Library System member libraries. Up to 4 chances to win through Friday, February 14th!

Play online: bridgeslibrarysystem.org/frost

In the News:

- Mukwonago Community Library Director Abby Armour was honored with the American Library Association 'I Love My Librarian Award!'
 - o [ALA Website](#)
 - o [Fox 6 News Story](#)
 - o [Freeman Article](#)
 - o [Associated Press Article](#)
 - o [WMTV15 Madison News Story](#)
- Library Memory Project Celebrates an Award-winning Year:
 - o [Watertown Daily Times Article](#)
 - o [Waukesha Freeman Article](#)
 - o [Urban Milwaukee Article](#)
- Muskego Public Library was featured in a Fox 6 News about Universal Changing Tables: [Fox 6 News Story](#)
- Bridges member libraries donated 457 used books and new teaching resources to the Jefferson County Jail: [Facebook Post](#)

December/January Newsletters:

Marketing Magic:

- January 3: 64.77% Open Rate
- December 20: 68.18% Open Rate
- December 6: 70.45% Open Rate

Monthly Bridges:

- January 7: data to come
- December 2: 49.17% Open Rate

Legislators:

- December 12: 40% Open Rate